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COMPREHENSIVE TEST-BAN TREATY

Letter dated 21 August 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the enclosed statement issued on 17 August 1995 by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. P. J. Keating, MP, on China's decision to continue nuclear testing.

I request that the statement be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 65 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Richard ROWE

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Annex

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA
DATED 17 AUGUST 1995

Australia condemns the latest test of a nuclear weapon by China.

This test is the second in only three months since the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May this year. At the NPT Review and Extension Conference, all nuclear-weapon States agreed to exercise "utmost restraint" with respect to nuclear testing, pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996, and to work sincerely towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. China's action flies in the face of these undertakings, which it supported at the NPT Conference.

One of the unfortunate consequences of China's decision to continue testing is that nations that aspire to possess nuclear weapons will question the sincerity of nuclear-weapon States about eventual nuclear disarmament and their interest in developing nuclear weapons may be reinforced. Such a development would be a serious threat to world peace.

Australia welcomes the recent statement of the ASEAN Regional Forum, which called on nuclear-weapon States to bring an immediate end to nuclear testing, as a clear expression of regional and international concerns about the continued and unwarranted testing of nuclear weapons.

Australians are angry that, despite the end of the cold war and the successful extension of the NPT, both China and France have decided to continue testing nuclear weapons. Our disappointment is the greater because of the restraint exhibited by the other nuclear-weapon States and the fact that these weapons testing programmes are occurring at a critical time in international negotiations on a number of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives.

Australia urges China to cease its nuclear-weapons testing programme now as an important boost to both global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts and global security.

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